

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the above-identified application in view of the remarks following is respectfully requested.

Status of Claims

The claims before the Examiner are claims 1-6 and 9-22. Claims 1-5, 9-11 and 16-22 stand rejected under § 103(b). The Examiner's communication of October 28, 2008, indicates that the rejections of claims 6 and 12-15 have been withdrawn.

In view of this new indication of allowability, and in order to expedite the procedure, Applicant has chosen to amend the claims, without prejudice, to conform to the subject matter indicated to be allowable, on the clear understanding that this will result in immediate allowance of the application. Specifically, independent claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of dependent claim 6, itself now canceled. Similarly, claim 12 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of claim 1, rendering it into independent form. Claims 16-22 have been canceled.

In the unlikely event that the Examiner considers that the attached amendments will not render the application immediately allowable, the Applicant requests that this paper be disregarded without entering the amendment, and that the appeal procedure continue with issuance of the Examiner's reply brief.

§ 103(a) Rejections

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-5, 9-11 and 16-22 under § 103(a).

These rejections remain identical to the corresponding rejections of the Final Rejection mailed November 30, 2007, and are respectfully traversed for all the reasons detailed in the Appeal Brief filed August 11, 2008.

While continuing to traverse the rejections, in view of the new indication of allowability in the Examiner's communication of October 28, 2008, the Applicant has chosen to conform the claims to the subject matter indicated to be allowable.

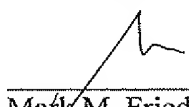
Specifically, independent claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of dependent claim 6, itself now canceled. Similarly, claim 12 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of claim 1, rendering it into independent form. Claims 16-22 have been canceled.

The Applicant retains the right to file any and all subject matter canceled from the claims by these amendments in a subsequent continuation application.

The amendments render moot all of the Examiner's rejections under § 103(a), and are believed to put the application in condition for immediate allowance.

In view of the above amendments, it is respectfully submitted that independent claims 1 and 12, and hence also dependent claims 2-5, 9-11 and 13-15, are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and prompt notice of allowance are respectfully and earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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